

BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE BORDER
A Committee of the California Biodiversity Council

May 22, 2007
1:00 to 4:30 pm

SANDAG
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA
(619) 699-1900

AGENDA

Simultaneous translation services will be provided for this meeting

1. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee will meet as subcommittees for the first two hours of the meeting. When you arrive please join either the Las Californias Subcommittee or the Tijuana Estuary Issues Subcommittee. Please see the attached annotated agenda for each committee.

2. FULL COMMITTEE CONVENES AT 3:00 PM

The full committee will discuss proposed recommendations and the content and nature of the report to the CBC. The charge of the BATB committee is to advise the CBC on next steps for the Las Californias Conservation Initiative and the issues related to the health of the Tijuana River Estuary. Our goal is to have a draft report ready for discussion at the next BATB meeting.

3. SET NEXT MEETING

Staff is proposing July 17, 2007 in Mexico. The goal for this meeting is to approve a report for submittal to the CBC at their fall meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Annotated agenda for the Tijuana River Estuary Issues Subcommittee
Annotated agenda for the Las Californias Subcommittee
Meeting notes from the February 27, 2007 Tijuana Estuary Subcommittee
Meeting notes from the February 27, 2007 Las Californias Subcommittee
Directions to meeting location

PLEASE RSVP – janetfairbanks@cox.net – THANKS!!!

The Tijuana Estuary Issues Subcommittee agenda includes:

1. Condominial Sewer project

Building a condominial sewer for Los Laureles and Los Sauces Canyons will provide sewage collection and treatment for existing homes in these two colonias, at the same time serving to demonstrate alternative ways in which collection services can be provided to low-income neighborhoods throughout Tijuana.

Toribio Cueva, Under Director, CESPT has been invited to discuss the development and ongoing maintenance of a condominial sewer system. He will also address other efforts to capture and treat sewage prior to reaching the Tijuana River.

Jason Evans and Tim Boelke, Engineers Without Borders have been invited to discuss their role in the development of this project.

The group will discuss next steps to assist the development of this project, including recommendations to the CBC.

2. Water collectors and diverters

Maximizing the diversion of runoff in the Tijuana River in Mexico to the International Treatment Plant helps reduce beach closures at Imperial Beach.

Toribio Cueva from CESPT will discuss the cause for the small, dry-weather flows of water from the Tijuana River into the estuary (how frequent are they, etc.), and what can be done to minimize these flows (i.e., upgrading pumps, improving maintenance, etc.). He will also discuss the progress of the new Japanese Bank-credit wastewater treatment plants and how these increased dry-weather flows in the Tijuana River in Mexico will be diverted before reaching the estuary.

We will also discuss the existing IBWC diverters in Smuggler's Gulch and Goat Canyon and whether it is possible to implement a similar system in Yogurt Canyon.

The group will discuss what, if anything, the US can do to assist or encourage improvements to Mexico's water diversion infrastructure.

3. Sediment Basins

Additional sediment basins will help address the issue of ongoing sediment eroding from the hills in Tijuana washing down the canyons into the estuary.

The group will discuss the proposal to add sediment basins in Los Sauces/Yogurt, Matadero/Smugglers and Los Laureles/Goat Canyons on the Mexican side of the border and in Smuggler's Canyon on the United States side (potentially as part of the DHS Border Infrastructure Project). Issues that need to be discussed include: potential locations, determining cost to build and maintain each basin, identifying potential funding sources, and identifying the appropriate agency to site, build, and manage the basins. Preparation of a grant to accomplish this will be discussed.

The group will also discuss excavation of sediment built up on the US side of Yogurt Canyon. A grant will be needed to engineer and permit the work to excavate and dispose of the sediment at this location, and determine the appropriate time to excavate given ongoing erosion from Yogurt Canyon.

The group will also discuss funding opportunities for ongoing training for Mexican developers on low impact grading and development practices and other best management grading practices. This could involve US universities working in partnership with CICESE and other Mexican universities to jointly sponsor seminars and/or prepare curriculum.

4. Conservation Easements

The development of conservation easements along the border will aid in the environmental protection of the Tijuana River estuary. California State Parks (as manager of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR)) and the XVII Tijuana City Council signed an MOU agreeing to cooperate in various actions to create conservation easements.

The group will review a map of the proposed easement locations and then hear from Saul Guzman, SEMARNAT, and Ana Elena Espinoza who have been working with Oscar Romo to identify and secure the proposed easements.

5. Waste tire cleanup and recycling program

Waste tires that wash down the hills of Tijuana into the estuary are a major polluter that is not only unsightly but impairs the ecological function of the estuary.

At the last meeting the group had an extensive discussion on what needs to be done to prevent waste tire pollution in the estuary, and if this is not successful, how to address the enormous task of picking up the tires, cleaning them, and properly recycling them.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board has prepared a 5-Year Waste Tire Plan that is currently being reviewed by the Waste Management Board. The plan includes funds for several border related projects including a border tire flow study, grants to local government for waste tire clean up, and grant for market development and new technology. The group will review the work of the CIWMB and discuss the various opportunities

available to access funds to collect, clean, and properly dispose of tires that wash into the estuary.

Clay Phillips will report on his continued conversations with Mr. Talamantez regarding the feasibility of developing a viable waste tire recycling program in San Diego County utilizing not only tires that pollute the estuary, but waste tires in Mexico that could legally be brought back to this country to be recycled or marketed. CIWMB will be asked if this is a viable idea that could be explored as part of their efforts to identify markets for waste tires.

6. Litter, including plastic bottles

Besides waste tires, the estuary suffers from all sorts of litter, especially plastic bottles. By working with the Department of Conservation and the State Coastal Conservancy, funds could be identified to provide ongoing clean-up assistance.

Representatives from the Department of Conservation and the State Coastal Conservancy have been invited to report on funding sources they administer that are available for trash pick up along the border, and to discuss ways in which we can limit the spread of trash before it reaches the estuary.

The group will identify agencies that could pursue these grant funds.

The Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative Subcommittee agenda includes:

1. Review purpose and progress of subcommittee – Kathy Viatella, The Nature Conservancy & Miguel Vargas, Pronatura
2. Report on Priorities for Conservation in Baja California - Christina Villeda, SEMARNAT, Baja California
3. Opportunities for Collaboration with Mexican Partners - All
4. Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative – Kathy Viatella, The Nature Conservancy & Miguel Vargas, Pronatura

A. Transboundary Conservation Opportunity – This effort addresses conservation linkage opportunities between Anza Borrego State Park and Parque Constitucion. A one-day stakeholders’ workshop is being planned this fall to examine the opportunities to create this linkage. Anza Borrego State Park is working with The Nature Conservancy on this issue. Discussions are underway on acquiring key properties on the US side to make this linkage a reality.

B. Border Security Measures – Meetings have been held in Mexico among representative from the Mexican Institute of Ecology (INE), Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), and College of the Northern Border (COLEF) to develop a response to how the proposed border fence will impact conservation objectives and wildlife corridors. The Department of Homeland Security, represented by the Border Patrol, has been asked to participate on the BATB committee to work with us on balancing the need for border security measures along with the need for conservation and wildlife movement across the border.

5. Develop a strategy for completing a work plan.